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ORATION

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

City Council and Citizens of Boston,

ON THE

ONE HUNDRED AND FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF THE DECLARATION
OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

JULY 4, 1877.

BY

HON. WILLIAM WIRT WARREN.



Boston:

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE CITY COUNCIL.

M D C C C L X X V I I .



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Quo in tempore ipso adeo magno animo civitas fuit, ut consuli ex tanta clade cujus ipse causa maxima fuisset, redeunti, et obviam itum frequenter ab omnibus ordinibus sit, et gratiæ actiæ quod de re-publica non desperasset. —Liv. xxii. c. lxi.



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CITY OF BOSTON.

IN COMMON COUNCIL, July 5, 1877.

Ordered, That the thanks of the City Council be tendered to the Hon. WILLIAM WIRT WARREN, for the very appropriate, interesting, and eloquent oration delivered by him before the municipal authorities of the City of Boston on the occasion of the one hundred and first anniversary of American Independence; and that he be requested to furnish a copy of the same for publication.

Sent up for concurrence.

BENJAMIN POPE,
President.

IN BOARD OF ALDERMEN, July 9, 1877. •

Concurred.

JOHN T. CLARK,
Chairman.

Approved July 10, 1877.

FREDERICK O. PRINCE,
Mayor.

EXERCISES AT THE BOSTON THEATRE.

THE oration was delivered in the Boston Theatre, before an audience of three thousand persons. After music by the Cadet Band, the Mayor, Hon. FREDERICK O. PRINCE, introduced the chaplain of the occasion, the Rev. ROBERT LAIRD COLLIER, who made an eloquent prayer. The Mayor then spoke as follows : —

We are assembled, fellow-citizens, for the purpose of celebrating, *more majorum*, the anniversary of the Declaration of American Independence. It is fitting and proper that we should do so, for there is no event recorded in our annals more solemn and important than this great announcement to the world by the patriotic men of 1776, in Congress assembled, that the American colonies were no longer British dependencies, but free, sovereign, and independent States. What human act can be more grave and momentous than that which creates a nation? The four millions of people who hailed the dawn of the 4th of July, 1776, are now approaching fifty millions. Their rejoicings and acclamations this day, no longer confined to the narrow territory comprising the original

thirteen colonies, resound throughout a vast continent washed by two mighty oceans. If there be any day in the year which should be dear and sacred to Americans, it is this day. Upon its recurrence, all political differences and animosities should be put aside. With hearts purified of every disturbing sentiment we should bow in gratitude to Almighty God for the national blessings we are permitted to enjoy.

Be assured that when this anniversary and its associations shall be forgotten, or regarded with indifference and apathy, the patriotic spirit which alone can defend and maintain the liberties born of our great Magna Charta will have gone from us, and when we have followed the fate of the other nations of the past, the philosophic historian, in tracing effects to their causes, will date our decline and fall from the decadence of this spirit. The causes which led to, and the results which flowed from, the great Declaration, and the reflections naturally suggested thereby, have been "often and eloquently told;" but no patriotic heart can tire of the repetition or listen to the story without fresh emotions of gratitude toward the noble men who, by their sufferings and sacrifices achieved the Independence they promulgated in the Declaration. These results have not been confined to our own country. The political principles announced

by the Fathers on the 4th of July, 1776, have influenced the governments of the world and affected the destiny of nations. This influence still continues, and will not cease until civilization, through some terrible cause, shall be blotted from the earth.

But it is not for me to speak to you of this theme on this occasion. You have come here to listen to other and more eloquent lips, and I will not detain you longer from the exercises. I will ask you, in the first place, to listen to the recitation of a poem, written by the Rev. GEORGE A. BETHUNE, by Miss H. E. HASKINS.

The poem was entitled "The Fourth of July," and it was read in a manner to elicit from the audience a warm tribute of applause. The Declaration of Independence was then read in an impressive manner, by Mr. GEORGE F. BABBITT. The Mayor next introduced the Hon. WILLIAM WIRT WARREN as the orator, who delivered the following oration:—

ORATION.



At that time, says the historian Livy, there was in the State such greatness of soul that the people of all ranks went out in crowds to meet that consul returning from the field of slaughter, who had been himself the main cause of the misfortune, and gave him thanks because he had not despaired of the republic.

THE battle of Cannæ had been fought and lost. The Roman Republic seemed, to all appearance, about to become subject to the victorious Carthaginian. But in that critical hour there was no thought of yielding. The people of all classes felt, with one accord, that, so long as faith in the Republic remained, so long its ultimate triumph over all its enemies might be confidently hoped for.

Our Republic is threatened by no foreign adversary. Even if war should beat upon it we need not fear for the result. The broad ocean protects its borders, and everywhere mighty rivers and mountain ranges interpose to prevent the advance of an invading army, while recent and terrible experience has proven that no part of our country, and no class of our people, of whatever origin, are wanting in courage or endurance, when the Republic calls its children to arms. But we have heard on all sides

despairing voices, as if the termination of the first century of our national existence had preceded by but a short period the final overthrow of our institutions. I know of no more fitting subject to reflect upon in this opening year of the second century than the real condition of our country. What is the promise of the second century of our Independence? Let us, before we yield to despondency, or indulge in too glowing dreams of what the future has in store for us, calmly review the grounds for fear or for hope. Let us see if in this year we, as a nation, are moving forward and upward in our moral and political career, or backward and toward a lower plane. Let us see if our affairs are so critical that it is worthy of special mention if a leader can be found who does not despair of the Republic.

For this purpose it may be well for us to bring together, in the first place, all the scattered charges that have been made by the timid, the disappointed, the friends of other countries and other forms of government, the advocates of special reforms, the believers in particular religious creeds, in short, by all classes of men who so revere the past that they see little good in the present; or, on the other hand, those who are so bent upon some scheme to bring about the future perfection of mankind that they can see no progress, but only danger, in any moral, social, or political movement which does not accord with

their preconceived theories. Let us hear what they say. They discourse of politics. They say, Your experiment of self-government, heretofore perhaps of a doubtful result, these last few years have proved to be a disastrous failure. Every one of the principles of your complex organization has been treated with contempt. Your Federal Government has made and unmade States. It has taken from the States powers that were reserved to them, and from the people rights that they never ceded to it. The distribution of the powers of government into three departments has likewise been disregarded. Your Executive interferes unrebuked with legislation. Your Congress by turns encroaches upon executive functions, and anon yields to executive demands. Your judiciary is modified by your Executive at a critical season, and its decisions are reversed really by executive action. Again, your whole body of subordinate officials, from a member of the cabinet to the lowest tide-waiter in the custom-house, are appointed and retained only by a corrupt combination between the executive and the legislative bodies, whereby each representative of the States and of the people secures his portion of the spoils of office and his share of influence in the country; so that this crowd of interested persons have for years packed your caucuses, and led and controlled the people whom they were appointed, theoretically, to serve. If you come to the people

themselves you have nothing better to show. From highest to lowest they are so wedded to party that they never look at the right or wrong of a question, but, with the exception of a few men, who profess to act from higher motives, who do a good deal of protesting and speaking and writing, but influence few votes, and, in fact, generally abandon their positions before election day, you have no one who is not as much the slave of his party as the soldier is bound to obey the orders of his commander. To such an extent has this proceeded that, when you finally, in your last attempt to elect a President of the United States, found the voice of the majority actually set at nought, and the votes of whole States counted for the candidate against whom their people had voted; when you knew that this was accomplished by a conspiracy organized and carried through by your own officers, — done, too, in the face of day, and with hardly an attempt at concealment, — there was not only no organized plan to prevent the consummation of the fraud, but there was no protest either before or after the event, and no united public opinion, so far as could be observed or learned through the press, except on one simple point, and that was, that some result, no matter what, might be reached. And so little was the moral aspect of the question regarded, so little importance is attached to it now, that if one but ventures to allude in public to the great wicked-

ness, he is sneered at and derided, even by your high-toned independent newspapers, as a man who seeks to revive dead issues; as a fool if he does not admit that, if an administration only pursues a correct policy after it gets into power, it is not of the slightest consequence how it gets in; as a man wanting in moral perception, if he does not clearly comprehend that good deeds while in office atone for the crime of stealing the office itself. And so this class of people conclude by asserting that, where the rulers are so corrupt and the people so indifferent, it can be a question of but a few years when we shall have to give up a Republic and adopt some other form of government.

But this is not all. We are told by another class, who look at the social rather than the political side of affairs, that there are evident signs of decay in the facts presented to their observation. There is a constantly decreasing birth-rate, they say, among the people who are considered Americans because their ancestors came to this country a few generations before some other people's ancestors. There is a growing disposition to ease and luxury. Bankruptcy is so common as to be no longer disgraceful, and so peculiar in its operation that, instead of leaving its subject poor, both he and his family seem to be, if anything, better fed and housed and clothed after than before their misfortunes. Not character, but

wealth, is the great object of desire, and, in default of the reality, the simulation of wealth is attempted. So that our social life is hollow. The substance everywhere yields to appearance. Those who cannot on all sides envy those who can make a display and hold a social position. Hence false pride and envy and jealousy are all the time ruling passions, and the honest, simple, homely farm and family life of the Revolution has become distasteful, and finds none, or at best but few, to imitate it. Another reason, say this class of the despairing, for taking a gloomy view of the future, is the fact that our population has become so heterogeneous. We must contend hereafter not only with the diversity of habit and opinions, and wants and interests which flow from the vast extent of our country and its variety of soil and climate, and which in a short time would make it extremely difficult to hold in union a people originally homogeneous; we have the still greater task before us to keep in one nation people of two distinct races, and of almost every nationality. They are of many tongues and of conflicting beliefs, nay, even of different religions, and of no religion at all. Even the one thing which should unite them all, — those of the earlier English emigrations, those of Irish origin or descent, with the German, the French, the Italian, and the Scandinavian, — that love of liberty which brought them or their ancestors to these shores, is not under-

stood in the same way by all. It does not lead the German to the same views of government as the Frenchman, nor either to a full comprehension of the federal system. Even our boasted trial by jury is to them anything but the important safeguard of civil rights which it seems to us. They find in the State legislation numerous instances of the interference by government with the life and habits of the citizen. They cannot be satisfied with a government of law simply. The freedom they long for is too often freedom from the law, and not merely freedom under the law. Is it wonderful that the country is jealous of the city, and that the city looks askance at the country, when we reflect that in the States which have metropolitan cities, the population of these cities is in very large and usually controlling numbers made up of these later and discordant materials, while the control of affairs in the country remains in the hands of those who are to the manor born?

The conflict between the different races must continue. It is deeper seated than any conflict of sections. Difference of language intensifies it, but the fundamental facts are diverse habits of thought and absolutely hostile opinions on subjects which all deem of vital importance. The politicians see this, and already seek their advantages by attempting to revive in this New World the religious struggle which has been carried on for centuries in the Old. The

American people of the various Protestant faiths are warned of the danger from the Catholic church. The Protestant or Catholic of foreign birth needs no great exhorting to awaken anew in his heart the sense of wrong which he always felt at home at the oppression practised upon him by his antagonist. Of course, it depends upon where his home was, whether it was the Catholic or the Protestant who was accustomed to feel the sense of wrong; and *vice versa*, whether it was the Protestant or Catholic who was the oppressor. But while your politicians are adroit and ready to bring to the support of their party the terrible hatreds always evoked by religious controversy, your people, of whose intelligence and allegiance to the principle of toleration you are never tired of boasting, instead of making examples of these wicked stirrers-up of strife, fall at once into the trap thus laid for them. Their intelligence gives way before a blind fear of the scarlet woman who so scared their forefathers. Their devotion to toleration yields to the same unreasoning fright. They second the efforts of the demagogue; and elections in great States have already been decided by the force of the same kind of religious intolerance which burned Protestants at the stake in Spain, and sent Quakers into exile in New England; and this, notwithstanding the fact that in those very elections most important questions of political economy, and of

the policy of the General Government towards the States, were pending. Further, the clergy themselves on both sides helped on the strife.

It need not be said that the pretext for raising the question was found in connection with our free public-school system. The religionists on both sides insisted that in one way or another a religious should be combined with a secular education. Of course, by a religious education each side meant an inculcation of its own religious views. The one would accomplish this by religious exercises in the schools; the other by separating the scholars, so that each school might be attended by pupils of a particular faith, which could be there inculcated along with the regular studies; thus, of course, making necessary a division of the public-school fund. While their methods were different, their error was the same. Both would use the public schools for their sectarian ends. And the people were found more ready to quarrel over the question, which of two wrong ways should be followed, than to say, at once and unitedly, this is not a political question; your sectarian controversies must not invade the schools; no creed shall be known within their walls; no exercise which offends the conscience of any citizen, be he Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Gentile. If you believe that religious or secular education must go together, provide your own schools and mode of

teaching. The public money can be used only to provide that kind and amount of learning which all desire alike, and which all can acquire in common. Instead of taking this position, it seems as if the people, both Protestant and Catholic, and the clergy who are, above all, responsible if they aid in arousing a religious conflict, were bent upon dividing upon this religious quarrel. All history teaches that such controversies quickly get beyond the control of the leaders in them; that they arouse the worst passions of men; that they cause the bloodiest wars, which leave both parties where they started; and that humanity and religion itself are the great losers by the struggle. Yet, continue these cavillers, your people, knowing all this, applaud the men who, for political ends, invent, so to speak, the religious controversy; follow their banners, and rush blindly on in a course, which, if followed out, might lead to a civil war more bitter, more senseless, more extended, than that through which we have passed.

What reason, then, have you for hoping to make your Republic permanent, when your people are shown to possess the same faults, which, in other people, have proved fatal to other Republics? But this is not all. You have two powerful influences at work which, indeed, control your affairs in spite of whatever good impulses the people themselves might have. These are your corporations and your public

press. The power of the former is wonderful, when we remember that it is really nothing but the power of organized capital. Yet your Legislatures in State after State seem to have no function but to frame into laws the projects of one or another gigantic corporation. And your National Congress, while for fifteen years its halls have resounded to speeches which breathed nothing but patriotism and love for the equality of man, has been invaded and made captive by the myrmidons of these continental corporations, which have undertaken the most magnificent enterprises for the public good, upon the single condition that the public treasury should pay the cost, while the corporations took the profit to repay them for the thought and attention and public spirit which they had bestowed upon the matter. But no private person, and no combination of private persons, can contend against one of these corporations; and when these artificial persons combine, and carry on their operations through State after State, and get further the Federal Government committed to their schemes, they are for the time all-powerful, and compel governments and people to obey their behests. And then your press, what an instrument of corruption! The organs of party, proceed these prophets of evil, might be expected to distort the truth in the interest of their clients. But need they attack private character, when such an attack

has no foundation? Yet they do so, and seem even more rejoiced to make a false charge against a candidate of the opposite party than a true one. For a false charge is more apt to produce a reply or an explanation, than a controversy with the journal, the end of which is sure to be that if the candidate did not steal a hen, as originally charged, he yet left out a consonant in spelling the name of some country town in European Russia. And this of course shows that the newspaper was right from the first.

But the non-partisan newspapers are no better. They blackguard men on both sides; that is their principal distinction. The grave and serious charge against the press is this: It disregards truth; it seeks only to make a sensation. Yet as the stream rises as high and no higher than its source, so the press, which is the creature of the popular breath, and seeks diligently to gratify the opinions and tastes, and to reach the moral and political level, of the public on whom it depends, must be held to truly reflect the character, the opinions, the aspirations of the people. And, judging by the general tone of the press, these critics triumphantly conclude, what faith can we have in that people?

The truth is, they go on (encouraged by their own assertions), that the people are incapable of thought. A generation of mothers has come upon the stage,

which is the natural product, intellectually considered, of a girlhood fed upon novels; a generation of fathers, which is but the embodiment of the multiplication table; so that when serious matters call for the exercise of the necessary faculties, the labor is too irksome. The first appeal to sentiment decides the conduct of men and women both. The few who are accustomed to reflect, who are not unmindful that while sentiment may lead men to wish for what is just and true, reason alone can point out the way to accomplish the desired end; who know also that the real question, on every occasion when a political or social reform is demanded, is not whether the end is desirable, but what are the best means to reach the end; and, as a consequence, that what is required of the people is the power to think, and not simply the capacity to feel; but who find parties built upon sentiment merely, and directed by the designing, who play upon the sentiment; measures carried out without any attention being paid to their efficiency, but because they seem to be framed in sympathy with the ruling sentiment, — these few, the only ones who recognize the true character of political and social problems, despair of the Republic, and despair of the social system when folly, under the mask of sentiment, controls the masses of the people, and the faculty of reason is no longer called into exercise.

Time would fail us to repeat the views of those

who hold that our institutions, as at present adjusted, are anything but a success, but who believe and contend that with certain modifications they would be quite perfect. Some say the fault is in the mode of electing the chief magistrate, or the duration of his office. They are disagreed as to the change that should be made. He should be elected by the people, without the intervention of the electoral college. A majority of all the people should elect. A majority in each State should throw the vote of the State. The electoral college should be retained, but should meet as one body and decide upon the eligibility of its own members. The term of the President should be lengthened. He should be eligible for only one term. The Cabinet should have seats in the House of Representatives or Senate, or both, and should resign if a cabinet measure is defeated. The will of the people should be allowed to decide all questions. The administration should always be in accord with the majority in the popular branch. Two houses are an absurdity; they were created in imitation of the English Parliament; but the reason which required a House of Lords there does not exist here, and the Senate has no *raison d'être*. A reform in the civil service, thinks another, will remedy all evils. Office must be conferred upon the most worthy, either for a stated term, or during good behavior. There must be representation of minorities, says another. At

present the minority has no right. The majority is a tyrant, and its dominion is as unjustifiable as that of a monarch or an oligarchy. We must restrain the suffrage, says another. Intelligence should rule, and an educational qualification be everywhere established. No, replies still another, the suffrage is a right, and should be made as universal as possible. There should be no distinction of race, or birthplace, or sex. One says there should be compulsory education, regulated by the General Government, so as to produce a homogeneous opinion and avert the evils arising from our diverse population. On the other hand, it is said that education should be limited in its extent, so far as the great body of a people is concerned, since by over-educating you make the lower classes discontented, and unwilling to labor and rear families in the condition of life wherein they are placed.

Thus the theorists, with conflicting views on what should be done, yet agree that unless something is done to change the present condition of things, we must abandon hope and look forward to the speedy demolition of the Republic, to the usual period of anarchy and civil strife, and to that final result of every experiment of popular government hitherto, — the Empire.

After this somewhat detailed recital of the various causes which might lead us to fear what the second century of our national existence may have in store for us,

I turn with pleasure to examine the other side of the picture. I do not purpose to reply to each argument of the various classes of the despondent, seriatim. I propose to classify their grounds of apprehension; to oppose to these the grounds of hope; to suggest briefly the remedies for such evils as are real and must continue in operation, and to show what will be the field of intelligent activity in which patriotism may labor with the reasonable certainty of advancing the prosperity of our country and the welfare, not only of its citizens, but of all mankind, during the coming century.

In the first place, it must be evident that many of the misfortunes of the time are of the time only. They arose from the unusual experience through which we have recently passed; they could have been anticipated by all familiar with the history of nations; they have been no greater than, if as great, as was feared by the thoughtful, and already we have, in a great measure, recovered from them. A civil war, while it always affords illustrious examples of patriotism and self-sacrifice; while it discovers to mankind heroes, and gives opportunity for statesmen, — yet, especially as it progresses, brings to the front the demagogues, ambitious for power, place, or profit. And it results that just in proportion to its exigencies, the measures of administration are likely to be ill-advised, and to sacrifice the future interests of the country to its present apparent necessities.

No civil war ever afforded more memorable examples of this fact than our own. It is, I believe, generally conceded that the vicious economical measures adopted during the war, the Legal Tender Act, the 5-20 Loan Act, — construed one way to get it through Congress, and another way to win subscriptions from capitalists, — and the self-defeating measures for enormous taxes through the tariff and the internal revenues, have cost the industry of the country more than the whole legitimate expenses of the war. Not only that, but to the same cause may be traced that impatience of legitimate business, that dissatisfaction with reasonable profits, that sudden accumulation of large fortunes, which threw our community into such a state of fever; and, on the other hand, to the same cause may also be more remotely attributed the shrinkage of nominal values, the wide-spread bankruptcy, the forced economy of more recent years. Nothing is more true than that every waste of war, every loss through blunders of finance or false systems of taxation must be paid for. The burden must be removed from the State by the labor of the people. But the labor is easier in a country like this, where Nature herself, by her generous aid, everywhere waits to be the helpmate of man; where the river-god longs to turn the wheel for the miller, and Ceres runs alongside the plough of the farmer with her promise of an abundant harvest. Already we see

our way out of the great load of debt which has weighed upon capital and labor alike. We see opening new avenues of foreign trade, new employments for home manufacture. When the West can look forward to her speedy recognition as the chief granary of the Old World; when the ingenuity of the ship-owner and the enterprise of the merchant have enabled the agriculturist from distant Iowa and remoter Texas to drive, so to speak, his flocks and his herds to the very gates of the metropolis of the mother country, we certainly should banish all fear for the future material prosperity of our land. Great as is our debt, our resources are greater. Even the bankruptcy, so wide-spread, however disastrous to individuals and to business it seems, and, in fact, is for a while, however depressing it has been in the past, is really a reason for hope in the future, since it places business on a sound basis, and, like a severe but well-performed surgical operation, cuts out and eradicates that fever-sore which for years has kept the business of the country in a state of undue excitement and corresponding depression.

If this view of the future material condition of the country is correct, we shall conclude that the evils resulting from former mistakes in our economical policy are only temporary. We have only to bend our efforts to prevent a repetition of past errors, and to correct those which still exist, or which interested

parties, allied to visionaries, who do not see the dross under the silver-plating, seek to impose upon us by law.

The same suggestion, that they are of temporary origin and already losing their hold upon the popular prejudices, enables us to rid ourselves of all fear of permanent injury from many evil practices, in fact in violation of the spirit and letter of the Constitution, and in their tendency subversive of our system of government, which obtained during and soon after the war. On all sides we witness a determination and an effort to return to a correct theory of our Constitution, and to conduct public affairs in accordance with that theory. I would not abate one iota from the severity of the condemnation which should be visited upon those who, in order to preserve power in a particular party, have perverted and violated the Constitution and those rights of man on which the Declaration of Independence puts its justification for the separation from the crown of England. I should be ashamed of myself, and ashamed of any man claiming to be an American citizen, if he or I could utter, or with patience listen to, a word of apology for any one of those men who, after the last election, wilfully abused the positions of public trust which they occupied, for the purpose either of perverting the truth of the electoral count, or of preventing the truth from its legitimate triumph over deceit and fraud.

But that was their act. They may safely be left to the verdict of history, even if that of their fellow-countrymen has not already put a seal of condemnation upon them. For I believe that while there was no loud-voiced judgment of an unanimous people, expressed on the instant of the announcement that the conspiracy against the people was successful, owing in great measure to the want of opportunity for giving vent to such unanimous expression, there has yet been a silent, but constantly progressing, public opinion formed, which, though not boisterous or intrusive in the press, or pulpit, or on the platform, is yet of controlling force in the community, and will, if ever occasion comes, destroy in a moment any man, or set of men, who seek to repeat the crime of the past year; and that, instead of fearing for the freedom of elections hereafter, we ought to take courage, and hold that the very interference with that freedom, by directing the attention of all men to it, has made it certain that the right of every man to have his vote counted will never again be disregarded. The day of the carpet-bagger and the returning-board has gone by. Every State and every citizen in our broad land is to-day free. I care not to discuss whether this has been brought about by the voluntary act of the administration, or in answer to the demand of a large majority of the people of all parties. In one case a large share of praise

belongs to the former; in the other, or in either case, we are inspired with hope for the future, and renewed faith in the people. For we recognize not only that the public opinion will eventually be arrayed on the side of right and justice and freedom, but also that it can sometimes prevail to change the settled policy of a party long, and still, in power.

Indeed, I think, whatever we may say of particular men, that the conduct of the people in approving so unanimously the scheme for the electoral count, and in submitting so unreservedly to the decisions of the tribunal, is deserving of the highest praise. Instead of inspiring us with distrust, it should increase our faith in them; for it signifies that they had faith in the honesty of the proposed Commission, and believed that, as they themselves desired, the merits of the controversy would be ascertained, and the truth permitted to triumph; and, in the second place, it is a remarkable instance of how far the people of this country will go in frowning down every resort to violence, and in relying upon the remedy, always in their own hands, at the ballot-box.

Hence we draw another source of confidence in the future. The evils which spring from partisanship no one will venture to deny, and there is surely no need of exaggerating them. But they are not peculiar to our country or to a Republic. They exist wherever parties are known. They are greater

or less according to the integrity and ability of those who, at any time or in any country, mingle in politics and lead the different sides. In our view of the future we must assume that parties will continue to exist, and will be the chief instrumentalities for directing the policy of the nation. Let us accept the inevitable, and hope that that advantage to the public weal which may be accomplished through the organization of men into parties may more than compensate for the evils of party excesses. After all, parties are but parts of the whole people. And this leads us to make another distinction between the different causes of apprehension that are felt for our future.

The distinction is between those causes of despondency which spring from the character, or rather want of character, and from the condition of the whole people, and those which arise from recent maladministration, or the accidental ascendancy for a time of bad men. For, if it be true that a people is hopelessly corrupt, then, indeed, remedies are ineffectual, and despair alone is left; but, if the heart of the people is sound, then, however much they may for a time be carried away by passion or deluded by false sentiment, that sober second-thought upon which the fathers relied will surely bring them back to the right way, and justify that confidence in mankind upon which all hope for the Republic must

depend. It is not wonderful that during the war many acts of unauthorized power were committed, many encroachments upon one department of government were made by another, without calling forth the immediate censure of the public; it is not wonderful that the public service became corrupt at a time when its scope of action became so extended; but a universal voice demands its reform, and the only division of sentiment is in regard to the means of bringing that reformation about. With regard to the lessening growth of population, which affects some with grave alarm, the fact cannot be safely asserted with reference to the whole country. In older sections, where wealth accumulates, such an experience would accord with our expectations. In more recently settled parts of the country, and in the whole country, the increase of population is as rapid as could be desired. The conclusions of social science ought only to be based on the broadest induction.

It is no new thing that wealth should find its worshippers. The truth is that the desire for acquisition is one of the strongest motives to inspire labor; and while it often brings misery to a man, and for a time to a special community, it always operates to develop the resources and increase the influence and importance of the nation. We live different lives from our revolutionary ancestors; but

the whole world is different. Science and art, through commerce, supply us with luxuries which to them were inaccessible. All these evils, in part temporary, in part imaginary, in part exaggerated, need cause us little fear. If, however, the people have lost their devotion to truth; if they are carried away by the sensational; if they have lost the habit of thought; if they are no longer capable of self-restraint,—then our condition is far from enviable. But are these things so? Does not, in the theatre, the triumph of virtue over vice still call forth the unanimous plaudits of the house? The sensational had its triumph long ago, when the public nerves, so to speak, had been unstrung by the excitements of the war. Like the mania for speculation, it has little power now over men. We refuse to be moved by rumors; we distrust everything that seems extravagant; we laugh at politicians or preachers who substitute sound for sense. Indeed, we demur to the graces of rhetoric, such is our dread of whatever prolongs the discourse. There has been, I admit, owing perhaps to their engrossment in business, an unwillingness on the part of many to devote much thought or study to subjects of importance in politics or social science. This habit probably arose long before the war, and, in fact, soon after our institutions had become established; when they almost ran alone; when no disturbance threatened, and no really im-

portant question was before the people. Now that men see that their welfare and that of their posterity compels the attention of all to these important subjects, if the rights of all are to be preserved, there is a great and will be an increasing disposition to cultivate thought and to give the necessary time to public affairs.

As to what has been objected to the power of corporations and the misconduct of the press, candor compels the admission that there is too much truth in what has been said on these subjects. But, on the other hand, the danger from these sources has been frequently pointed out, and cannot be held to be beyond remedy. Corporations were a great aid to the development of our resources. They are still and will continue to be productive of great good. They are but creatures of the State, and subject to its control. So the evils believed to arise from an ill-managed press are nothing when we remember that it is of the last importance that the press should be free. Much of the talk about the press is seen to be ill-founded, if we but recall the necessary conditions of its usefulness. It must every day set before its readers the news from all parts of the world. Its editorials must be written at the moment, and from such impression of fact as the daily reports convey.

The reader must fully comprehend that the daily press, like the mirror, presents but a reflection of the

appearance of things. It does not and cannot attempt anything more. And if we turn to our periodical literature, we shall find an opportunity for all sides on every question to be heard, and a generally thoughtful and fair discussion of things on their merits. Finally, as to both the influence of corporations and the press, a correct public opinion will keep both in their place, and make both useful and harmless. The same reflections that lead us to trust our people in other respects, will enable us to conclude that we are fast moving towards that correct public opinion, and may confidently look forward to the gradual disappearance of all real danger from either of the two causes of which we have been speaking.

There remains, however, the dread of the consequences which may result from the differences of race, origin, religious views and habits of thought of our population. That these differences are to be slighted no one would pretend. That they can be overcome by the preponderance of one race or creed is unlikely; that they can be merged is no more probable. They must coexist in harmony and in independence; for if either of these can by any means ally to itself the power of the government, it will inflict upon the country no end of woes. They may be a blessing or a curse, according as the whole people understand the function of their government and demand that it be

administered in its true spirit. Here we have a real danger to be faced, but the remedy is in our hands. The remedy is to restrict the domain of government, National and State, within the narrowest possible limits. The Republic recognizes religion; it ignores creeds. It recognizes freedom of thought; it lends its aid to the theories of no race or sect. It guards liberty, but it gives no man or class license. Well understood, our federal system will protect us abroad and unite us at home. Perverted to the behest of a section, a race, or a sect, it would be an unendurable tyranny, a foe to mankind, and an obstacle to all progress. The reservation of the control of domestic affairs to the States, the localization of power, the limitation of it by written constitutions, — these are the great triumphs of the first century of our independence.

The work begun by the first, but left to this century to complete, is not less important, viz., to carry into practice the great principle that not even to the State Government should be permitted any power not absolutely necessary to ensure the safety of the citizen in his life, his property, and the pursuit of such occupation and course of life as, without injury to other men, he may elect.

You may have under one jurisdiction men of all races, all nationalities, all creeds, all colors. Let them, while they all look to government for pro-

tection, feel that they can claim no favor. The Republic knows them but as men, as citizens. They shall use no office, no patronage, no public school, no institution, no public fund, no recognition, to get any advantage over others who yield allegiance to other religions, or practise other habits of life. Our political contests must be confined to political issues, and the man who would stir up a strife of races, or sections, or sects, is, morally speaking, a traitor to the Republic, and a correct public opinion will consign him to a traitor's infamy. If this remedy for the danger apprehended from these differences of race and religion be properly attended to, the danger will disappear, and liberty be the gainer. For, in one view, what is liberty but diversity; what despotism but unwitting conformity? And so that which seems the weakness is in fact the strength of our nation. I sympathize with all those who look upon the addition to our domain of new territory as giving new ground to hope for the permanence of our institutions; and I have no fear that an accession of population, from whatever source, will prove otherwise than beneficial. For our Republic is bound together by but a rope of sand, unless our people recognize that its underlying principle is unity from diversity. *E pluribus unum* may apply literally only to the union of the States. But the

motto does not incorrectly describe the unity which coexists with, and in fact owes its strength to, the multiplicity of interests, and opinions and beliefs, which our country offers to view. So I say, extend our limits wherever we rightfully may; and hold out, as our fathers did, a welcome to all comers, Catholic or Protestant, Jew or Gentile, Moslem or Christian. Whose voice, if not that of the beneficent Republic, can so fitly utter the oft-quoted words of the ancient dramatist:—

“ Nil humani a me alienum puto ” ?

For it is, after all, man whose welfare and happiness are the end of all our hopes and labors, as it is upon man himself that we depend to accomplish his own emancipation from all forms of bondage. For man constitutions are formed. For man is all government established. This, formerly the distinctive faith of the American, is now the accepted creed of progressive men in all civilized countries. A government of the people, for the people and by the people, is a watchword that in itself proclaims an irrepressible conflict between the friends of freedom and the advocates of power. It brings into harmony the hitherto discordant voices of authority and liberty. It remits government to its own place, and rests its sanction upon those for whose benefit alone it exists. It is from no superstitious reverence for a musty

parchment, from no bigoted faith in certain phrases of language, that we urge all never to falter in their allegiance to the federal system. It is because that system best represents the union of freedom and order, and makes the latter sure and the former possible. *But it by no means follows that there is no more work left for the present century to do. Patriotism indeed pauses with the confines of the country. There must be a limit beyond which the federal system cannot be extended. But that love of man and of his rights, which imbued those who declared our independence and framed our system of government, cannot be bounded by any natural barrier. It will find in the coming time its full sphere of activity. Already we see, in the movement for treaties of commercial reciprocity, a recognition of the principle that mankind must be freed from the shackles which governments would put upon their freedom of intercourse; in other words, a movement for further limiting the interference of government with the freedom of the citizen, — that is, in this case, an affirmation of the broadest right to trade on even terms with other men of what nation soever. In the field of political economy again government comes in as an obstructive agent, if it comes in at all. He would be unworthy to be called a student of that as yet imperfect science who should attempt to establish any proposition of currency, of finance, of internal or customs

taxation, from the experience of one nation alone. It would seem as if the advocates of some new theories at the West might have their attention awakened by the fact that the real value of their favorite silver can only be known from day to day by a telegram through the cable.

We see here how the second century may carry to a more full fruition the seed sown in the first by the wisdom of the fathers. At the beginning of their work they found independence necessary. The first step was to cut off commercial intercourse. A separate government came later. Yet, as I have said, whatever they did was but a means to an end, and that end the more perfect freedom of man. But we in our day, in the pursuit of the same end, while we find independence in government, and also independence from government, useful aids, yet have learned that the pathway of progress can hereafter be successfully trod only by recognizing the interdependence of nation upon nation, of man upon mankind. To break down the traditions and the prejudices which blind the eyes of our people to this truth; to create from many diverse nations that union and harmony and peace which, injuring none, may benefit all, is a task well worth the efforts of the patriot and the philanthropist. For the accomplishment of this work we must have faith in the people; and if in any-

thing they be found wanting, those who possess superior advantages in point of knowledge, or power of thought, or facility in spoken or written language, must guide and instruct the less favored. Such guidance and instruction will not be in vain, if only a proper spirit enter into the labor. Our educated men must forego that indifference to public affairs which to so large an extent has taken possession of them. Better suffer the personal abuse and discomfort of the most bitter political contests, than remit the decision of a single important question to the hands of selfish place-hunters, charlatans, and buyers of votes.

If the people go wrong, the fault will lie at the door of those who, fit to be leaders, having the duty of leadership upon them, yet through mental laziness or moral cowardice desert their posts. But I banish the fear of such baseness. The young men who are now coming upon the stage have been well instructed in their public duties; they have enthusiasm and public spirit; and many, also, who have hitherto made light of the affairs that concern us all are coming to understand that there is more true satisfaction in attempting to be of use to their fellow-men, even if the attempt fail, than in sulkily declining all exertion for the public good, and having to carry through life the recollection of their recreancy to duty.

From every college in the land, at this time of the annual commencement exercises, there comes a uniform voice, which exhorts the children of *alma mater*, those who have long since left her fold, not less than those whom this year sends forth into the world; to bear constantly in mind the right which the State has upon them to claim their zealous co-operation in whatever makes for her good, their ready and vigorous opposition to whatever would lower her standard or bring evil upon her. These things show that a fresh interest in public affairs has taken possession of our institutions of learning. The mind and heart of the people will respond to their call. These auspicious omens cheer us.

Let us, then, renew our faith in the people, and we shall never despair of the Republic. We should believe in it, trust it, labor for it, love it, nay, almost revere it. Why should we not? It is founded in eternal justice, and challenges our faith. It is our best minister for good, and is worthy our trust. It protects us; we should work for it. It is a kind and no oppressive mother; we cannot help loving it. And shall we not revere it also, in no spirit of idolatry, as a mere device of man, but because it conforms to the order of the universe, and epitomizes for man the grand scheme of creation? The lines of the poet upon our country's flag have become household words over all our land: —

“ Flag of the free heart's hope and home !
By angel hands to valor given ;
Thy stars have lit the welkin dome,
And all thy hues were born in heaven.”

So there is in that Union formed of many States, each of which has its own sphere of activity, within which it is independent and self-centred, yet all bound together by a tie which holds them in perpetual connection with that federal state from which each and all derive the strength and aid which make their independence valuable, and guarantee their permanence, no merely fanciful reproduction, in the realm of human affairs, of that great work of the Creator himself, — that system of which our earth is a member, and in which each independent planet, revolving on its own axis, yet clings to its orbit, and owns the power of the central sun, source of all warmth and life, so that the nearer Mercury, small though it be, is no more firmly bound to its regular course than is the bulky Jupiter or remotest Neptune. So may it ever be with our system. May the sun lose its power and become dim, may the planets fly from their orbits, as soon as a single State, from smallest Rhode Island to imperial Texas, shall forget the bonds that hold it to the Republic, or the Republic herself cease to be an ever-increasing blessing to all.

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